



**// OVERFLOW**  
LIVING WATER FOR AN EMPTY AGE

**STUDY OF  
GOD'S WORD**

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**GUIDE**



## OVERFLOW PODCAST

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Ruth Haley Barton, and Justin Earley.

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APPLE



SPOTIFY

THEN HE SAID TO ME, "SON OF MAN, EAT  
THIS SCROLL I AM GIVING YOU AND FILL  
YOUR STOMACH WITH IT." SO I ATE IT, AND IT  
TASTED AS SWEET AS HONEY IN MY MOUTH.

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EZEKIEL 3:3

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO STUDY GOD'S WORD?



THIS MONTH, WE HAVE THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO SAVOR THE STORY OF  
GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

THIS YEAR, THROUGH OVERFLOW, WE  
HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REFLECT AND SEE  
THAT THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION  
AND THE NUMBER OF INPUTS AROUND  
US IS EXCESSIVE. IF WE ARE NOT  
INTENTIONAL WITH OUR TIME TO FOCUS  
ON GOD, WE WILL SIMPLY FOCUS ON  
OTHER THINGS.

This is also true about studying the Bible. We are shaped by the narratives that surround us and the number of narratives that seek to define you daily is unending. If you are a businessperson in Buckhead, there is a narrative and set of expectations that accompanies that role. If you are a stay-at-home mom, inherently, there are narratives that define how you do life and spend your days. Regardless of your current role, there are narratives that surround your daily life that shape who you are and how you navigate the world.

God also provides a narrative to shape and mold who you are and who you are becoming.

Studying the Bible does not mean suddenly becoming a seminary student, translating Hebrew and Greek words, buying large Bible commentaries, or spending hours each day pouring over the Scriptures. Studying God's Word means internalizing God's narrative for your life.

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**This month, we will look at a few different ways we can apply Jesus' stories to our lives and use God's narrative to directly impact who we are.**

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## **OUR PROMISE**

The consistent promise throughout Overflow has always been the same: this is worth your time and effort. This month, though, the encouragement is that studying God's word is imperative for your relationship with him. The Bible is the most incredible love story ever written, and it is a story about you and God.

The other promise is that this month will not be intimidating. While we hope to equip you with new ways to read and study the Bible, the Scripture promises that the Holy Spirit will guide your reading and learning in powerful ways if you allow your life to be immersed in God's narrative.



Take a few moments to write an honest and vulnerable reflection on God's narrative in your life. How often do you read God's Word? How often do you reflect or ponder the realities present within God's narrative?

Then, set a realistic goal for yourself this month. How often would you like to read the Bible? Ask God to help fuel your desire for his word above other distractions.

## A FEW POINTERS & SUGGESTIONS:



### ENJOY A STORY:

The Bible is the story of God's people. It is entrenched with narratives about God's grace, passion, and favor in the person of Jesus.

The number one way to change someone is through emotional connection—this is why the best commercials tell a quick story; they captivate your heart and persuade you to take action.

Jesus did not need psychological insights and studies to know that a story is the best way to communicate with us. So, this month, approach your Bible with fresh eyes, seeking new stories, and go on an adventure with the God who has preserved the Bible just for you.



## MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE:

The Bible is ancient Jewish literature that is artistically designed to interpret itself and encourage a lifetime of re-reading and reflection.

### PSALM 1

Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers.

Not so the wicked!  
They are like chaff  
that the wind blows away.  
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

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According to Psalm 1, we are what we ponder. This month, you are not expected to become biblical scholars or even historians calling into account the places and footsteps of Jesus. This month, you are invited on a journey to think about God's story and your place in it.



Have you ever considered the Bible to be meditative literature? How can you plan to meditate on Scripture this month?

## WHY DO WE PRACTICE?

Have you ever heard of the 10,000-hour rule? It was popularized by Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers*. As Gladwell explains it, the rule goes like this: It takes 10,000 hours of intensive (and intentional) practice to achieve mastery of something. If you intentionally practice something for 10,000 hours over a lifetime, you become better at that than 95% of the population.

He uses many examples, one of which is violinists. Gladwell contends that if you practice violin for an average of 10 minutes daily for 20 years, you are one of the world's leading violinists. Many factors contribute to your success, but it is not all natural ability. Instead, natural ability is born from consistency and intentionality.

Imagine what it could mean to be a disciple of Jesus if we committed to reading 10 minutes of Scripture a day or even just spending 10 minutes a day meditating on the Scripture we read yesterday (or heard from the pulpit on Sunday).

We all feel pressed for time; that is not a unique human feeling, especially in today's world. On average, Americans spend three or four hours a day consuming television. That is a lot of time shaping the narrative of our minds and hearts. How can we claim some of that time back for our own self-development as disciples of Christ?





Reflect on your day and how you spend your time. Can you carve out 10 minutes a day to be intentional in Scripture? Where could you find the time?

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICH

It will come as no surprise to you that I love to study the Bible. I have dedicated my life to it, after all. The Bible's story is profound and beautiful, offering deep learning and growth for the Body of Christ.

While studying the Bible is imperative to disciples of Jesus, community is equally important. Before Jesus performed miracles, he created a community by inviting people to do life with him. You, too, must create a community through which you can speak truth, share Biblical interpretations, receive truth, and grow in your walk with Christ.

Scripture promises that God will speak to his people consistently, offering truth and hope above all else. While we continue to resource the church with discipleship tools, my prayer for you is that you will take this journey with someone who knows you deeply.

In Christ,  
Rich

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Rich'.

# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TEACH?



CHRISTIANS KNOW AND RECOGNIZE  
THAT JESUS CAME TO FULFILL  
THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW. BUT,  
CONSIDER HIS ORIGINAL AUDIENCE  
FOR A MOMENT.

Most of the people Jesus spoke to were Jewish, and because of that, he made a few assumptions about them. One of the assumptions he made was that his audience knew the Torah, or in our case, the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus' teaching is littered with what Tim Mackie calls "hyperlinks" back to the Old Testament. Let's look at a few examples:

## THE CALLING OF MATTHEW

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:9-13)

If you are an English major or grammar student, you may recognize the additional quotes above, but if you listen to Scripture or read quickly, you may miss the subtle indication that Jesus is quoting something else.

**HOSEA 6:6 SAYS,**

**"FOR I DESIRE MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
OF GOD RATHER THAN BURNT OFFERINGS."**

Jesus is telling his disciples to remember Hosea's story when he is questioned about eating with tax collectors. If you know the story, you can see how this gives narrative complexity to Jesus' response and how important it was for Jesus' listeners to be able to quickly recall Hosea's story of pursuit and redemption. The reference alone gives a fuller perspective on who Jesus is and why he eats with sinners.

## JESUS DECLARES HIS MINISTRY

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**Luke 4:14–21**

This example is a little more apparent as the narrative tells you that Jesus read from the scroll in the synagogue. The shocking part of this story is not him quoting Scripture but claiming himself as part of the Scriptures. Every Jewish male in the synagogue would have that Scripture memorized and would have been shocked when Jesus made the correlation between God's promise and himself. It is interesting that even Jesus used the Scriptures to declare his ministry.

## JESUS AND GOD ARE ONE?

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

"We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"?' If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside—what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am

God's Son'? Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

### John 10:22–39

A Christian reader may wonder why Jesus' Jewish opponents were so upset, and we can generally rationalize that because he claimed to be God, they are enraged. While that is absolutely correct, it is not the full story.



#### Read Psalm 82 and consider the following:

1. How does seeing the New Testament in light of the Old Testament change the narrative?
2. How does Jesus use Scripture to bolster his claim that he is God's Son?

While knowing these “hyperlinks” back to the Old Testament is not imperative to your interpretation of Scripture, it does showcase that Jesus assumes his audience is well saturated in the Word of God.

Just like Jesus assumes we fast by saying “*when* you fast” instead of “*if* you fast”, Jesus also assumes our love and desire for God is bigger than our desire for worldly goods. In other words, Jesus assumes we pursue his Word more than we pursue our phones.

**This month, the hope is that our desires align with who Jesus knows we are designed to be.**

# INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

One opportunity for individual study is to use the Inductive Method. This Bible study method encourages careful observations of Scripture passages and allows for individual conclusions. Most commonly, this method is defined by three parts: Observation, Interpretation, and Application.

**Let's give it a try.**

**Read Psalm 82 and consider the following:**

## 1. Context

- Who is the author in this text? Who is the audience?
- What is the literary device being used in the text? (for example is it a letter, a speech, a parable, a narrative, etc.?)

2. Use your Overflow Journal to write questions you have about the text. As you read and reread, seek to answer some of these questions. You may need to read what comes before this passage and what comes after.

3. Consider for a moment if this passage sounds familiar. If so, where have you seen this before? Is the author the same? Is the message similar or different?

4. **Observations:** if you make any observations about this text or anything it brings to mind, be sure to note that in your Overflow Journal. Your observations are crucial to your study.

The beauty of God-breathed Scripture is that it is always applicable to you and your life (2 Timothy 3:16). If we do not allow Scripture to change how we live and think about God, then studying becomes pointless.

The Inductive Method can be used on any Scripture, so be sure to use it as a guide and resource as you continue your practice of studying God's Word this month.

# RESOURCES

**Since Scripture is meditative literature, the only real requirement is reading (or listening) to Scripture and allowing it to saturate your mind.**

**However, if you wish to dig a little deeper, below is a list of resources for you to consider.**

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## **PEACHTREE'S QUEST SCRIPTURE PODCAST**

[PeachtreeChurch.com/Quest](http://PeachtreeChurch.com/Quest)

A few years ago, our pastors read through the Bible. These recordings are still available and can be found on our Overflow Podcast Channel by choosing Season 1.

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## **THE BIBLE PROJECT**

[www.BibleProject.com](http://www.BibleProject.com)

This resource, taught and designed by Tim Mackie, creates beautiful videos that discuss not only the individual books of the Bible but also thematic learnings when considering the full arc of Scripture. In addition, they host the Bible Project Podcast, available wherever you listen to your podcasts. You may even consider using these videos to help lead your Belong Community—they are that good!



## **A STUDY BIBLE**

If you do not already have one, consider purchasing a study Bible. During Quest: Exploring God's Story Together, we gifted individuals with the Quest Study Bible, and hopefully, you grabbed a copy. If not, there are many great-quality study Bibles available on the market, and we encourage you to pick one if you feel led. Peachtree Church, in general, utilizes the NIV translation when studying and sharing Scripture.

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## **N.T. WRIGHT FOR EVERYONE BIBLE STUDY GUIDES**

N.T. Wright, one of the greatest theologians of our generation, has produced small, non-intimidating studies for each book of the Bible. These are great resources to grab and use alongside your study.

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## **YOUR SMALL GROUP**

Never underestimate the power of reading and studying Scripture together. The power of a group learning together is the different perspectives and collective wisdom the group provides, not that you gather around a biblical expert. Read something and share it with a friend, invite other voices into your contemplation, and value insight from others. God has gifted you a Christian community and church to grow in, make sure this resource is being utilized to the fullest.

# GROUP PRACTICE



THIS MONTH'S GROUP PRACTICE IS SIMILAR TO THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN FROM FEBRUARY, WHERE WE LET SCRIPTURE CONSUME OUR MINDS AND HEARTS. LECTIO DIVINA MAY BE A NEW PRACTICE FOR YOU, SO BE ENCOURAGED THAT THIS PROCESS OF STUDYING SCRIPTURE IS JUST AS IMPACTFUL AS STUDYING A COMMENTARY OR ATTENDING A LECTURE FROM A GREAT THEOLOGIAN. THIS PRACTICE ALLOWS YOUR HEART AND SOUL TO BE SATURATED WITH THE WORD OF GOD.



STUDY OF GOD'S WORD  
INTRODUCTION VIDEO

After a few moments of silent reflection, gather with your group and use the prompts below to recall our practices of simplicity and fasting from last month:

1. Take a few minutes to process and reflect on Peachtree's Fasting Day aloud with your group. Did you feel a tangible presence from God throughout your day? Did the day meet your expectations, or were you surprised by the experience?
2. Last month, we heard from Dr. Chuck Roberts how his experiences on the Appalachian trails allowed him to practice simplicity, focusing only on where he would sleep and how he would find water. Did you do anything last month to help clear some mental space and usher in peace through the practice of simplicity?



Scan the QR code to join Pastor Vicki Franch and Nancy Ike, Peachtree's Global Mission Director, for this month's video guide. Videos are also on our website at [PeachtreeChurch.com/Overflow](https://PeachtreeChurch.com/Overflow) and on YouTube.

This month, we will practice studying and meditating on Scripture using an age-old practice known as *Lectio Divina*. Traditionally a more Roman Catholic practice, *Lectio Divina* is a way of listening to the Lord through his Word and allowing the Spirit to guide and change us from within. While this concept may feel strange at first, be encouraged to embrace the meditation of Scripture and your group's different perspectives and be open to what the Lord has for you during this time.

# LECTIO DIVINIA

Lectio Divina is the practice of reading Scripture aloud, without emphasis, in four movements. The first movement allows for deep personal reflection, the second contemplates purpose and place, the third invites you to ask God what he is doing with you in this moment, and the fourth invites you to rest in God's goodness.

The Scripture on which to meditate during your Overflow Group Practice is printed below. It is the prayer Jesus prays to God on behalf of his followers (that is you; that is us!).

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***Group leaders will read aloud the following:***

Today, we have the privilege of hearing the words Jesus prayed over us before going to the cross. I (the group leader) will read the Scripture aloud four times. Each time, we will be intentional with our thoughts and prompts to allow God's Spirit to move within our reflection time.

To begin, find a comfortable seated position. Consider closing your eyes and opening your hands as a gesture of opening your heart and mind.

The first time I (group leader) read the Scripture, listen for a word or phrase that stands out to you.

***Group readers will read aloud the below Scripture passage.  
Be sure to read slowly, without narrative emphasis:***

“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

**John 17:6–19**

***After reading aloud, pause for approximately two minutes of quiet reflection time.***

***Then, read the following aloud:***

In your quiet reflection, consider the word or phrase the Lord keeps bringing to your mind. Feel the freedom to sit with it for a moment longer.

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***Pause another 45 seconds. Then read aloud the following:***

As I prepare to read the passage again, let the word or phrase that stood out become your invitation to dialogue with God. Allow the word or phrase to wash over you and permeate your thoughts and feelings.

***Read the Scripture passage aloud a second time.***

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***Then, pause for two minutes for quiet reflection. Then read aloud the following:***

As I prepare to read this Scripture a third time, consider what God is saying to you in these words. What do you want to say to God? What feelings do these words raise in you? Share your answers with God.

***Read the Scripture passage aloud a third time. Then, pause for two minutes for quiet reflection.***

***Then read aloud the following:***

I am going to read aloud the passage a final time. As I do, release the word or phrase you have been praying. Be still and rest in God's embrace. What gift has God given you to take away from this prayer? To what action might God be inviting you?

***Read the passage a final time, avoiding adding emphasis.***

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***At the conclusion, pause for final contemplative reflection.***

***Then, read the following closing prayer aloud:***

Jesus, your words simply stun us. Thank you for loving us and protecting us through the cross. God, may we hold fast to these words and the story of redemption you have gifted to each of us. Help us to dwell on the message you shared with us this evening. May it shape us and mold us to become more like Jesus with every breath we take. It is in his name we pray, Amen.

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Conclude your group time by sharing your Lectio Divina experience aloud with your group. Share as much or as little as you feel led.

## TIPS FOR INSTILLING BIBLE READING:

### Be a Role Model:

**Let Your Kids See You Open Your Bible:** Whether it's around the breakfast table or during wind-down time at the end of the night, there's power in children seeing their parents read God's Word. This simple act sets an example and creates a culture of prioritizing Scripture in your home.

### Scripture Memorization:

**Memory Verses in the Car:** Place Scripture memory verses on your car's dashboard or windows and work on memorizing them as a family during car rides. This can turn travel time into an opportunity for spiritual growth.

**Verses on Bathroom Mirrors:** Write Scripture verses on bathroom mirrors with a dry-erase marker. Seeing these verses daily while brushing teeth or getting ready can help with memorization and keep God's Word present in their minds.

### Listen to Kid-Friendly Bible Stories:

**Bible Podcasts:** Find a kid-friendly or student-friendly podcast that tells stories from the Bible and listen together during car rides. This not only entertains but also educates and reinforces biblical principles.

Each month, our Family Ministry Team will provide resources for your family to experience these practices in your home.



### **Incorporate Bible Time into Your Routine:**

**Scripture Before Screens:** Establish a family rule that involves reading a passage of Scripture before any screen time. This ensures that God's Word is prioritized and becomes a natural part of your daily life.

**Family Bible Night:** Designate one night a week as a family Bible night. After dinner, sit down together and spend time reading and discussing the Word. This creates a special, consistent time for spiritual growth and family bonding.

### **Service Projects:**

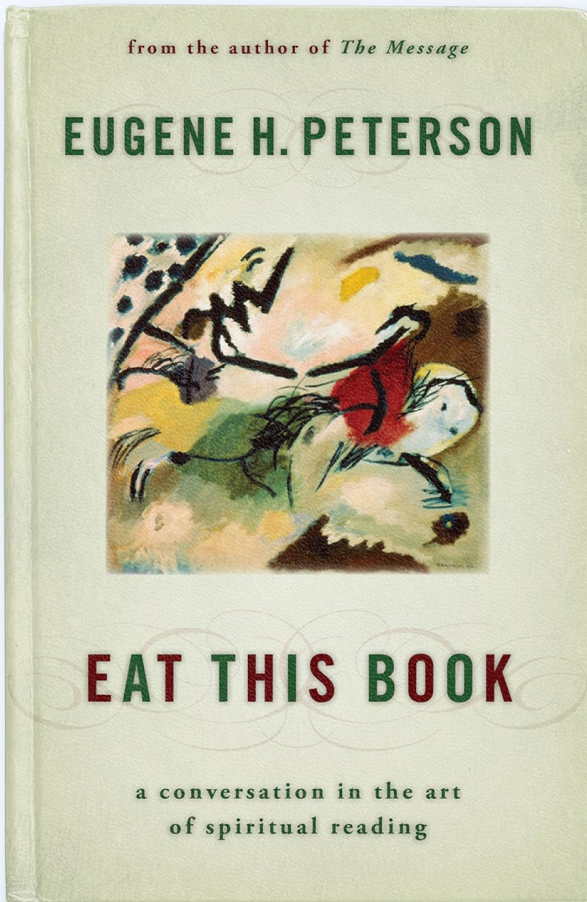
**Connect Bible lessons with service projects:** For example, after reading about Jesus feeding the 5,000, volunteer at a local food bank. This helps older children see the practical application of biblical teachings.



Scan the QR code to watch members from our Family Ministry Team help you as you continue to discern what this practice could look like in your family.

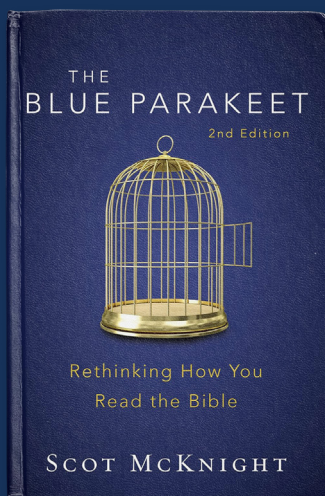
# RESOURCES

Want to go deeper in the Study of God's Word?  
Consider reading the suggested resource below:

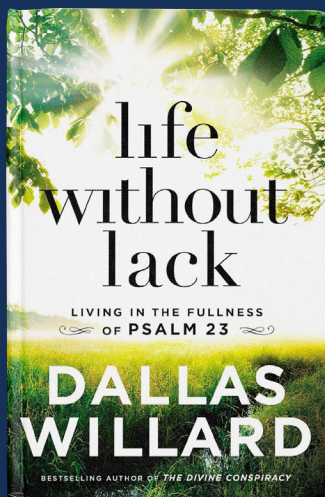


## EAT THIS BOOK

Eugene H. Peterson



**THE BLUE PARAKEET**  
Scot McKnight



**LIFE WITHOUT LACK**  
Dallas Willard

**THEREFORE, I URGE YOU, BROTHERS  
AND SISTERS, IN VIEW OF GOD'S  
MERCY, TO OFFER YOUR BODIES  
AS A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY AND  
PLEASING TO GOD—THIS IS YOUR  
TRUE AND PROPER WORSHIP. DO  
NOT CONFORM TO THE PATTERN OF  
THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED  
BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND.  
THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST  
AND APPROVE WHAT GOD'S WILL  
IS—HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND  
PERFECT WILL.**

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**ROMANS 12:1-2**



**PEACHTREE  
CHURCH**